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KGB's secrecy intact

Printing CIA lists tipping a balance

By Olivier Todd

PARIS—It was Viet Nam, 1965. We were on top of Black Virgin Mountain near the Cambodian frontier. The American Special Forces lieutenant said he was going to leave the Army pretty soon. I asked: "What then?"

"Well," he drawled candidly, "I'll either become an Episcopalian minister or join the CIA."

These last few days, with lists of real or alleged CIA agents punched up by liberals or leftists being published all over the world, particularly in Europe, I wonder what happened to that American officer. Is he preaching in Massachusetts? Or will he turn up on one of those somewhat incomplete CIA catalogs coming out of Madrid?

ONE POINT that most Europeans this I know to be true of Frenchmen—have rarely grasped is that for quite a few Americans it was not, until recently, a disgrace to serve in the Central Intelligence Agency. The respected French daily *Le Monde* a few days ago went so far as to suggest that there was nothing intrinsically wrong about belonging to an intelligence organization. But to the average Frenchman it stinks.

We are of two minds about this. We enjoy the dirty-tricks movies or the last John Le Carré novel. We know that nations must establish espionage and counterespionage networks, they have lived with them since tribes emerged. Yet, as citizens, we in France wash our hands of it all.

Some of us would like to remain neutral as between the CIA and the KGB, to stay as far removed as possible from American and Russian "imperialisms," equidistant from the "two hegemonies," as Charles de Gaulle put it.

Tough luck for the White House, the Pentagon, and the State Department that this new game of spotting CIA agents and publishing their name and addresses was invented in the United States. Most European reporters working on the CIA affair agree that their methods were inspired by CIA defectors like Victor Marchetti or Philip Agee.

I am not calling for a witch-hunt. I am simply stating a fact. Take the case of Liberation, the tiny left-wing French daily [circulation: around 20,000] that published the names of 44



CIA Director William Colby presents American flag to Richard Welch's widow at funeral.

alleged CIA officials attached to the U.S. Embassy in Paris; its editors said they would do the same for the KGB, if they could. But unfortunately it is easier to dig up information about CIA clandestine operations from official U.S. records than anything at all, even from unofficial sources in Moscow, about the criminal activities of the KGB.

Just skim through Sen. Church's November, 1975, report on CIA activities. A lot of it is there: Cuba, Chile, the Congo, Diem in Viet Nam, etc. With congressional reports, newspapers, and the new leftist knights at work, "covert" CIA operations are soon going to be as secret as prostitutes in Amsterdam windows. I take it that "deep cover" agents are not on the lists—or perhaps some of them are?

Many U.S. senators and congressmen critical of CIA meddlings and murders overlook one aspect of the framework in which the CIA operates: In U.S. missions abroad there tends to be, shall we say, a too-obvious overlapping between diplomats and CIA men, which helps neither in the long run even if it simplifies administration and telecommunications. French diplomacy avoids this confusion. The Quai D'Orsay does

not like to protect French agents. Those who work from embassies are often cold-shouldered by the civilian staff.

Americans may consider this is all cant. What is the difference between a diplomat and a CIA man writing up reports? In some cases, alas, the frontiers between diplomacy and spying are even more difficult to draw than those between espionage and war reporting. Frequently what one man calls information is another's intelligence.

Yet although diplomats need the synthetic results of intelligence work, the two functions, in democratic societies, should be kept as separate as possible. Otherwise we are heading for a situation in which every embassy counselor is going to be considered *a priori* a spy.

This is a highly complicated business. What is not complicated is the position that journalists should take: Under no circumstances should they willingly or consciously work for an espionage or counterespionage setup. Newsmen have their responsibilities in their handling of news. And some hard questions must be put: Do you, for instance, really fight the worst aspects of a secret intelligence unit by exposing its members to potential killers?

When you publish the name and private address of Richard Welch in Athens, are you responsible for his murder? Leftists reply that any secret-service man must assume the risks of his trade, and that the CIA interferes far too much, particularly in the Third World.

MANY OF THOSE who publish the lists are in good faith. But they are also naive. All CIA or KGB agents do not have diplomatic cover. More important still, the deterrent balance of nuclear terror partly rests on the balance of intelligence gathering. However much they check and counter-check those journalists who are now zeroing in on the CIA are sometimes seriously, sometimes lightly, changing that balance.

The golden rule of the game is: most capitals is that knowing the identities of the guys "on the other side" is more efficient than expelling them and then having to discover who their replacements are.

That, I suppose, is only one of the reasons why, when the East Germans years ago published the first "Who's Who in the CIA," the Americans did "Who's Who in the KGB."

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